

## Concerns of a Non-Tech Savvy Teacher

Ellen Zimmerman

Lamar University

### Abstract

This paper evaluates the impact that the Internet has made a one high school teachers teaching practices before and after the availability of the Internet in schools. Several articles have been cited regarding teacher's comfort level with technology, professional development and its impact on student learning and the possible existence of a divide due to age differences of teachers. There is a variance in opinion regarding differences based on age verses just differences in learning.

### **The Impact of the Internet in One Classroom**

The main topic of this paper is an overview of the impact of the Internet on a high school Spanish teacher. It's a common belief that teachers who were born before about 1980 are not as comfortable with technology as those who were born after that when computers were more prevalent in education. In my interview with the teacher I chose, she stated concerns such as the difference in age between her and the teachers she felt were more technology oriented, discomfort with the technology because of a lack of training, stress regarding the lack of time to learn more technology skills and how to implement technology into her classroom. I used these topics as the basis for my research and articles that have been cited.

The initial response from the teacher I chose to interview regarding their teaching practices and the Internet was in reference to the age difference between herself and other teachers who used technology in their own education. She stated that she is not as comfortable with all of the technological advancements as the younger teachers. This fact that has been prevalent in many studies as stated here regarding the challenge in modern education, "Most teachers still feel uncomfortable using technology in their teaching." (Seels, Campbell, & Talsma, 2003) My teacher stated that she has not changed her teaching practices significantly since the availability of the Internet because of her limited technology skills and concerns she has regarding Internet safety. She acknowledged an improvement in communication due to e-mail usage and less printing of documents because of their availability on the Internet and internal school network. But overall, she indicated that she has not significantly changed her classroom teaching practices.

While researching for this paper I found that there is a difference of opinion regarding what is commonly called the "digital divide". Some say there is one and some say there is not.

Prensky states, "... the single biggest problem facing education today is that our Digital Immigrant instructors, who speak an outdated language (that of the pre-digital age), are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language." (Prensky, 2001)

However, according to another article, "the digital divide thought to exist between "native" and "immigrant" users may be misleading..." (Guo, 2008) Whether or not a digital divide exists, I agree with a statement found in the article from Guo, "The key to professional growth for those teaching digital natives is to catch up to their students." (Guo, 2008)

The technology training that a teacher receives has a large impact on the ability they have to integrate technology and improve learning in the classroom. Research conducted in 1998 showed an improvement in higher order thinking in fourth and eighth grade math students when the teacher had received technology training. "Higher order uses of computers and professional development were positively related to students' academic achievement in mathematics for both fourth and eighth grade students." (Wenglinsky, 1998) Education continues to spend endless hours of training on non-productive lessons that teachers do not have enough opportunity to practice. "Nothing has promised so much and has been so frustratingly wasteful as the thousands of workshops and conferences that led to no significant change in practice when the teachers returned to their classrooms" (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991) On-going training is great but teachers need to be provided the opportunity to practice what they learn as supported by the following. "It needs to be purposeful and linked to the classroom teachers' needs and practices, not as someone else defines it but as they themselves perceive those needs to be. It needs also to be ongoing and, most importantly, viewed as part of what Hargreaves (1992) called professional growth, which should last one's entire career." (Hargreaves, 1992)

## References

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